



## From the Desk of Fr. Leo F. Arnone

### Welcome Back!

The secretaries and I had to produce this bulletin even before Christmas, and so I was anticipating that I may get a resurgence of my parishioners back at our Christmas and New Year's Masses – in fact, that was my

fervent Christmas prayer for my parishes!

Without parishioners in the pews, a pastor becomes more of a monk or hermit. Your physical presence within the life of the parish is the reason I get out of bed each morning. And so, to those who have pressed on with your weekly and daily Mass attendance, I am so very thankful! May Christ reward you richly for maintaining the active and regular practices of your Faith even in the midst of a pandemic.

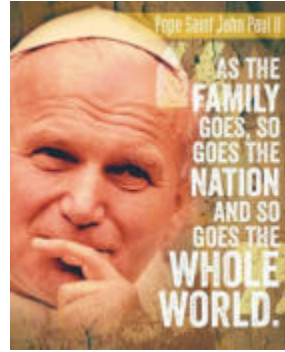
To those who have genuine concern for themselves as being a high risk against this virus and are “taking a chance” to participate in our Christmas and New Year's Masses, I heartily welcome you back! As you return to your rightful place in our pews, be assure of my special prayers for you: that God keep you safe and free from all harm – a prayer I've been offering for you all along.

To those who have been taking advantage of the bishop's lifting of the Sunday obligation to skip Mass attendance while fully engaging in every other aspect of daily living, I say: “Welcome back to you too!” But I am particularly concerned for your spiritual welfare. I know there is a large segment of the Catholic population who have not kept the Third Commandment. While the bishops do possess the authority to lift the Sunday obligation (ie, Mass attendance), they cannot dispense from the Command to *keep holy the sabbath day*. And so, all those who have not been watching the Mass on TV, reading the Readings for each Sunday Mass, or observing the Lord's Day in some capacity, you need now take that to Reconciliation. I know this is not the message you want to hear, but as pastor of souls it's my responsibility to speak it for the salvation of souls.

No matter how many times we stray from the regular and active practice of the Faith, our Lord will always say: “Welcome Back!” And so, I say it too with the hopes that your return will be more enduring.

**Parish Census & Registration Updates:** Our census records show that many families have not been attending for the past two years and more. It is necessary for me 1) to try to win them back, or 2) remove them from the census so that we are not assessed \$260.00 for each family on our census but not in our pews.

Every inactive family for will receive a letter inquiring of their current membership. If they do not respond within a reasonable time, I will remove their names for our census so that we are not assessed for them.



## FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

### I - FORMING A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

#### *The Rights of Children*

26. In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights. This is true for every child, but it becomes all the more urgent the smaller the child is and the more it is in need of everything, when it is sick, suffering or handicapped.

By fostering and exercising a tender and strong concern for every child that comes into this world, the Church fulfills a fundamental mission: for she is called upon to reveal and put forward anew in history the example and the commandment of Christ the Lord, who placed the child at the heart of the Kingdom of God: "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

I repeat once again what I said to the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 2, 1979: "I wish to express the joy that we all find in children, the springtime of life, the anticipation of the future history of each of our present earthly homelands. No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nation to which they belong and of the whole human family. **Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another.** And so, what better wish can I express for every nation and for the whole of mankind, and for all the children of the world than a better future in which respect for human rights will become a complete reality throughout the third millennium, which is drawing near?"



Acceptance, love, esteem, many-sided and united material, emotional, educational and spiritual concern for every child that comes into this world should always constitute a distinctive, essential characteristic of all Christians, in particular of the Christian family: thus children, while they are able to grow "in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man," offer their own precious contribution to building up the family community and even to the sanctification of their parents.

**Reflection:** ...and a little child shall lead them (Is. 11:6). The first and essential right of every child is the right to life! Once we secure that right, we can then strive to secure all others on their behalf. May the unborn child's innocence, vulnerability, and capacity for loving unconditionally lead us in how we ought to care for them and cherish them as our greatest national treasure!